

# SMSgt (Ret.) Rob Rosenberger

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
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W. STUART SYMINGTON  
Secretary of the Air Force

Director  
Aerospace Studies Inst  
ATTN: Archives Branch  
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W. Stuart Symington became the first Secretary of the Air Force September 18, 1947. He had previously served from January 31, 1946, as Assistant Secretary of War for Air when the Army Air Forces was a part of the War Department.

Mr. Symington has served in the government since he accepted appointment as Chairman of the Surplus Property Board July 16, 1945. Previously, he had been president and chairman of the Board of Directors of the Emerson Manufacturing Company of St. Louis, Missouri, one of the largest manufacturers of electric equipment in the United States. Under Mr. Symington's leadership the labor relations policies of the company became so successful that they attracted national attention. CMS 69

Mr. Symington was born June 26, 1901, at Amherst, Massachusetts. His father, William Stuart Symington, was a lawyer from Baltimore, Maryland, but a member of the faculty at Amherst College at the time of his son's birth. His mother was the former Miss Emily H. Harrison of Baltimore.

After graduation from Baltimore City College in 1918, Mr. Symington enlisted in the Army as a private, and at 17 became one of the Army's youngest second lieutenants.

After the war, Mr. Symington entered Yale University, and was graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

In 1923, Mr. Symington went to work for an uncle in the shops of the Symington Company of Rochester, New York, manufacturers of malleable iron products. Two years later he formed Eastern Clay Products, Inc., but in 1927 returned to the Symington Company as executive assistant to the president.

Mr. Symington resigned in 1930 to become president of the Colonial Radio Corporation, now a manufacturing division of Sylvania Electric Products. In January, 1935, he accepted the presidency of Rustless Iron and Steel Corporation, the country's largest manufacturer of stainless steel, but remained a director of Colonial Radio Corporation.

When Rustless Iron and Steel Corporation was sold to the American Rolling Mill Company (ARMCO) in 1937, Mr. Symington resigned and in 1938 accepted the presidency of Emerson Electric Manufacturing Company of St. Louis. He has made his home in St. Louis ever since.

Early in 1941 at the request of the Army, the Navy, and the Office of Production Management, Mr. Symington went to England with

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a group of aeronautical engineers to study the new art of gun turrets on military planes.

Mr. Symington returned from England to the United States in June, 1941, to build the world's largest airplane armament plant as part of the Emerson Company in St. Louis. The company produced great quantities of power-driven turrets to provide American bombers with protective fire power.

Mr. Symington's varied industrial experience and his company's war production record led to his appointment as chairman of the original three-member Surplus Property Board on July 16, 1945. On October 1, 1945, when Congress created the Surplus Property Administration, Mr. Symington was named Administrator. The task of this organization was to formulate the policies under which Government agencies disposed of the tremendous surplus of war properties.

Secretary Symington is six feet, two inches tall, weighs 190 pounds, and has brown hair and blue eyes. He plays tennis and golf, and is fond of fishing and hunting.

While in Rochester with the Symington Company, Mr. Symington met and married Miss Evelyn Wadsworth, daughter of Representative James W. Wadsworth of New York. They have two sons, Stuart Jr., and James. Both sons are veterans of World War II and now are attending Yale University. Each enlisted as a private, Stuart Jr., in the Army and James in the Marine Corps.

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P-216903 - Hon. W. Stewart Symington, Secretary  
of the Air Force.





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